

**RESPONDENT EXHIBITS**

**Before the**

**FEDERAL LABOR RELATIONS AUTHORITY**

**Case No.: DA-CO-14-0439**

**in the matter of:**

**AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT  
EMPLOYEES, LOCAL 2258, AFL-CIO**

**and**

**SHERIE R. MULLINS**

**RECEIVED**

**2015 JUL 30 AM 9:46**

**FLRA DALLAS REGION**

Free State Reporting, Inc.  
1378 Cape St. Claire Road  
Annapolis, MD 21409  
(410) 974-0947

Official Reporting Firm

**Peterson, Bridget**

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**From:** Peterson, Bridget  
**Sent:** Friday, November 14, 2014 1:12 PM  
**To:** Barnett, Karl  
**Cc:** Stephen Peterson (sepjr@gvvc.com)  
**Subject:** Re: Decision on Section 10

Karl,

I was surprised and disappointed by your decision which I received on Monday. Not only did I have to wait for 6 months for the decision, but it had no substance. I don't see why, you could not have given us that decision a few days after the Section 10 was filed.

Although, there has been times that you did not rule in the Union's favor, we always found your decisions to be well thought out and respected the fact that you took your time to write what we thought was a reasoned decision. The recent decision was similar to decisions that we had received from previous Area Directors which is why we chose not to submit written or oral presentations because it was a waste of time. We presented our cases during the Arbitration process instead.

Not only did we give you substantial information as to Ms. Mullins behavior, but we also submitted 3 statements from employees stating, not only that they were treated in an abusive and embarrassing manner by Ms. Mullins, but they also observed other employees being treated the same way. One employee stated that he had been verbally abused and humiliated on at least a dozen times and that he also observed other employees being verbally abused on at least a dozen occasions.

These employees did not do file a complaint because according to them, they knew that Management liked Ms. Mullins because she would do anything they asked her to do without questioning it and it would have been a waste of time to complain. The reason why they submitted those statements this time, was because they felt that she really crossed the line when she verbally attacked me when I have always been willing to address all of the employees issues and I always had their back. They also said that they were fed up with it.

Obviously, before making this decision, not only did you not really consider our presentation or the statements provided by the employees, but you did not speak to Bertha. In a conversation that I had with Bertha when Ms. Mullins filed a ULP against the Local, I asked her why did she disclosed the statements that the employees had given to me to Ms. Mullins, yet the statements that she received in favor of Ms. Mullins, she did not disclose to me.

I had told Bertha when I gave her the copies of the statements, that I did not have a problem with her reading the statements to Ms. Mullins, but to not disclose the names because I knew that Ms. Mullins would go after the employees and create a worse environment than what we already have.

Bertha told me that the reason why she had to disclose the statements to Ms. Mullins was because RO had informed her that if she was taking disciplinary action against Ms. Mullins, that she had to. She also told me that she did not show me the statements in favor of Ms. Mullins to me because they did not say anything negative about me and that they were not taking any action against me.

It's ironic that Bertha felt that Ms. Mullins behavior justified disciplinary action, yet you do not. It is also clear that Bertha was aware that Ms. Mullins had a history of abusive behavior towards her peers. Of course, Bertha did not disclose what action was taken, but whatever it was must not have had any impact, because shortly after she verbally attacked me and even before the Section 10 was filed, she humiliated another employee on a day that I was not there. When I was told the following morning, I approached the employee and asked if Ms. Mullins had yelled at her and humiliated her in front of her peers and the employee confirmed it. As I was walking away from the employee, I saw Ms. Mullins looking in our direction and when I walked past her towards my desk, I looked back and saw Ms. Mullins



walking toward the employee. Shortly after, the employee came to my desk asking me not to say or do anything about the incident. She said that she did not want any problems and to forget what she had told me earlier. She appeared nervous and I would go as far as to say that she appeared afraid, when just a little while before when she was speaking to me, she was angry. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out what took place. A lot of employees here are intimidated by her and now I see why.

When you visit the offices and talk to the Staff, you talk about respecting each other and getting along, but this decision does not back up what you say. During our 2<sup>nd</sup> Forum this year, Management made it clear that they would not condone bullying, yet you are allowing it. Once again, she gets away with what she does, which makes her more likely to do it again. As I just said, not long after the verbal attack on me, she verbally attacked another employee who wanted to do something about it until Ms. Mullins talked to her.

Your decision has no content whatsoever. While bullying is permitted, it will continue. A few employees were aware of this Section 10 because they were backing me up. They are even willing to testify at the Arbitration if we choose to go that route. It is just a matter of time before Ms. Mullins finds out about your decision if she doesn't already know and it will spread throughout the office. The message that the employees will be getting, is that Ms. Mullins can even bully the Union Representative and get away with it because the Area Director is also on her side. If the employees did not do anything before, they sure as hell are not going to do anything now.

I did not expect any disciplinary action to be taken against Bertha or Maria. For that matter, I did not even expect an apology from Ms. Mullins, nor do I want it because it would not be sincere. What I did want and also expected was a decision addressing all our issues and the statements that were submitted and a good explanation as to why you did not find that Ms. Mullins did anything wrong.

You need to improve communications with your Managers because Bertha herself would have told you that Ms. Mullins is verbally abusive. She believed me because I am very honest and would not, without a really good reason, report an employee. In my career of 31+ years as a Union Representative, it only happened once before. I fight for employees, not against them and you of all people should know that.

Once again, it is not that you ruled against the Union, it's that when I read your decision, I got a flashback of prior decisions that were written by Area Directors that preceded you. Also, that you condone bullying and you should be ashamed of yourself. You, more than the Managers, should set an example. I would appreciate it if Regional Office personnel who are on the Conference calls with the Union would not be hypocritical and say that bullying would not be condoned, when in fact it is. During our next Regional Conference call with all the Local Presidents, I will make sure and share this decision.

Sincerely,

Bridget Peterson  
Vice President  
AFGE Local 2258

*Bridget Peterson*  
*Claims Representative*

## UNION-MANAGEMENT GRIEVANCE

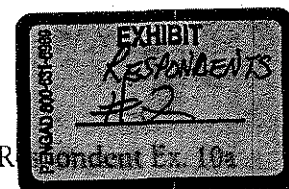
This constitutes a union-management grievance pursuant to Article 24 Section 10 of the National Agreement. Local 2258 is grieving management's failure in DO 815 to control the verbal outbursts of employee Sherie Mullins. Ms. Mullins has been berating her coworkers frequently for at least 13 years. Most times, these confrontations occur in the presence of or within earshot of coworkers and/or claimants. Her behavior is a direct violation of Article 3 Section 2A which requires all employees to deal with each other in a professional manner with courtesy, dignity and respect.

Inasmuch as it is management's duty to correct improper behavior on the part of employees under their jurisdiction and this has not happened in the case of Ms. Mullins, as relief the union requests that the district manager Bertha Cruz be disciplined for her failure to take action to correct this contract violation. This disciplinary action should take the form of a seven day suspension. Additionally, Ms. Mullins will be assigned to a position or be given duties that ensures/ensure she will not have personal contact with her coworkers.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Stephen E. Peterson Jr.*  
BP

Stephen E. Peterson Jr.  
President AFGE Local 2258



SOCIAL SECURITY

May 21, 2014

Sent via e-mail

Mr. Stephen Peterson  
President, AFGE Local 2258  
159 Whitetail Dr.  
Spring Branch, TX 78070

Dear Mr. Peterson:

This is regarding the union-management grievances filed pursuant to Article 24, Section 10. The grievance was not dated, but the post-mark date on the envelope sent by certified mail is May 16, 2014. All of the issues pertain only to the San Antonio Central District Office. However, due to the matters mentioned in the grievance, I have delegated the grievance to the Area Director for Area IV, Karl Barnett. He will be contacting you shortly to proceed with the grievance process.

If you have any questions, please call Carolyn Jackson at (214) 767-3739 in Management and Operations Support.

Sincerely,

/e/

Sheila Everett  
Regional Commissioner

cc: Karl Barnett, Area Director, Area IV

Dallas Region 1301 Young Street Dallas, TX 75202-5433

Respondent Ex. ~~10a~~

Page 2

Steve,

I am following up on the information below. I did not receive a response from you in writing or a request for an oral presentation. Please let me know if you are available for a teleconference to conduct an oral presentation or if you prefer to provide it in writing.

The following dates are available for a teleconference:

Monday, August 25 10:30 a. m.

Monday, August 25 11:30 a. m.

Friday, August 29 10:30 a. m.

If I do not hear from you by Friday, August 29, 2014, I will use the information that you have provided in the attached UMG.

Terry Johnson for Karl Barnett

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**From:** ||DA Area IV  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 21, 2014 1:52 PM  
**To:** 'Stephen E Peterson Jr ([sepjr@gvvc.com](mailto:sepjr@gvvc.com))'  
**Cc:** Barnett, Karl  
**Subject:** FW: UMG Delegation - San Antonio Cenral

Steve,

I have been designated to hear the oral presentation for the attached union-management grievance. Please see the dates below that I am available for a teleconference call to conduct the oral presentation:

- May 27, 28 or 29 at 1:00 p. m.

Please provide me with a mutually agreeable date that we can meet. I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,

Karl

**Peterson, Bridget**

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**Subject:** FW: UMG Delegation - San Antonio Central

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**From:** Stephen Peterson [mailto:sepjr@qvtc.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 10, 2014 2:09 PM  
**To:** Peterson, Bridget  
**Subject:** FW: UMG Delegation - San Antonio Central

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**From:** Stephen Peterson [mailto:sepjr@qvtc.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 09, 2014 10:42 PM  
**To:** '||DA Area IV'  
**Subject:** RE: UMG Delegation - San Antonio Central

Written Presentation on below addressed grievance:

Inasmuch as Ms. Mullins appears unable to refrain from berating and browbeating her coworkers, we request that she be placed in a position where she does not interact with them. Additionally, she should apologize to union rep Bridget Peterson for her improper behavior. Supervisor Maria Torres should be given a written reprimand for not intervening when Ms. Mullins was yelling at Ms. Peterson. No one should be allowed to behave in the unprofessional and detrimental manner in which Ms. Mullins behaves. It is disruptive to the office. She should always comport herself in a professional manner.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephen E. Peterson Jr.

President AFGE Local 2258

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**From:** ||DA Area IV [mailto:DA.Area.IV@ssa.gov]  
**Sent:** Friday, August 22, 2014 10:07 AM  
**To:** Stephen E Peterson Jr (sepjr@qvtc.com)  
**Cc:** Peterson, Bridget  
**Subject:** FW: UMG Delegation - San Antonio Central



## SOCIAL SECURITY

November 6, 2014

Mr. Stephen E. Peterson  
President, AFGE Local 2258  
c/o Social Security Administration  
402 Isom Road  
San Antonio, TX 78216

Dear Mr. Peterson:

This is in response to the union-management grievance (UMG) filed pursuant to Article 24, Section 10 of the 2012 National Agreement between the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE). The grievance was not dated; however, the post-mark date on the envelope sent via certified mail is May 16, 2014. I have been delegated the responsibility to respond on behalf of the Agency.

The grievance states that management in the San Antonio Central Field Office (FO) failed to control the verbal outbursts of employee Sherie Mullins. The grievance alleges Ms. Mullins has a thirteen year history of berating co-workers, many times in the presence of the public or other employees. The grievance states her alleged behavior violates Article 3 Section 2A which requires all employees to deal with each other in a professional manner with courtesy, dignity, and respect.

As remedy, the union asks for the following:

- Bertha Cruz, the manager of the San Antonio Central FO, receive a seven-day suspension for failure to correct the alleged violation of the National Agreement.
- Ms. Mullins be re-assigned to a position, or be given duties, that does not require her to have personal contact with her co-workers.

You submitted a written presentation on September 9, 2014. Below is a summary of the issues included in your presentation:

You re-iterated your request to have Ms. Mullins re-assigned to a position that does not require her to interact with other employees. You stated your belief that Ms. Mullins should apologize to the local union representative, Bridget Peterson, for her "improper behavior." Additionally, you indicated that operations supervisor, Maria Torres, should receive a written reprimand for failing to intervene during a verbal altercation in which Ms. Mullins allegedly yelled at Ms. Peterson.

You concluded your written presentation by stating no employee should be allowed to behave in an unprofessional and detrimental manner and Ms. Mullins should always conduct herself in a professional manner.

Respondent Ex. ~~10a~~

Page 5



My Response:

I have given careful consideration to the grievance filed by the union.

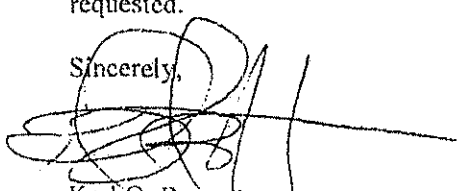
In the grievance filed by the union, you requested that the agency take disciplinary action against Bertha Cruz for her alleged failure to correct ongoing violations of Article 3 Section 2A, which requires all employees to deal with each other in a professional manner with courtesy, dignity, and respect. You allege Ms. Mullins has frequently berated her coworkers over a period of thirteen years. However, my analysis of this matter did not reveal a historical pattern of negative or disruptive behavior by Ms. Mullins towards her colleagues, as suggested by the union. Additionally, I am not aware of any prior complaints against Ms. Mullins for any violations of Article 3. Therefore, I do not find merit in the allegations against Ms. Mullins.

Your written presentation requested that the agency take action to discipline Maria Torres for allegedly not taking steps to intervene during a verbal confrontation between Ms. Mullins and Ms. Peterson that occurred on or about March 28, 2014. Additionally, you requested that Ms. Mullins issue an apology to Ms. Peterson for her alleged role in a verbal altercation between the two individuals. I have considered this matter and I did not obtain any proof that Ms. Mullins exhibited behavior that could be construed as being overly aggressive or hostile towards Ms. Peterson on the date in question.

I agree that employees should treat each other with dignity and respect at all times and management has been proactive in endorsing and upholding language highlighted in Article 3 Section 2A. Management has continuously made efforts to foster positive relationships between employees and with the union. As you recall, in June 2014, management personnel in the San Antonio cluster and union representatives participated in a mediation training aimed at promoting mutual trust, respect, and two-way communication among employees and between management and the union. Both parties agreed the training was very productive.

After careful review of this situation, I have determined that neither Ms. Mullins nor management in the San Antonio Central FO violated the National Agreement. Specifically, I find no violation of violation of Article 3, Section 2A. Therefore, I am not granting the relief you requested.

Sincerely,



Karl Q. Barnett  
Area Director  
Area IV

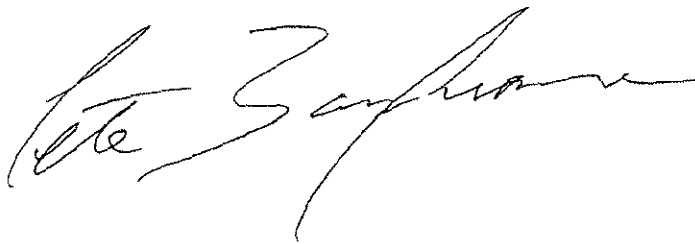
04/03/2014

Social Security Administration  
402 Isom Road  
San Antonio, TX 78216

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Pete Zambrano. I am a T-II Claims Representative. I work at the San Antonio Central SSA Office and before that I worked at the Downtown SSA Office. I have known and worked with Mrs. Sherie Mullins for approximately 13 years. Mrs. Mullins was also a T-II Claims Representative but recently she was promoted to the T-II TE position.

During my time that I have known Mrs. Mullins, her behavior at times towards others has been less than cordial. Mrs. Mullins vents her stress and anger towards others. She is difficult to talk to when she becomes angry and she lashes out to employees. She raises her voice in anger. She yells out. She embarrasses her fellow employees in front of other employees. She belittles other employees in front of their coworkers. Since my 13 years of working with her, she has been behaving in such a manner and management has not address her behavior and anger issue. I have been a victim of her anger and behavior issue more than a dozen times.



**Perez, Robin**

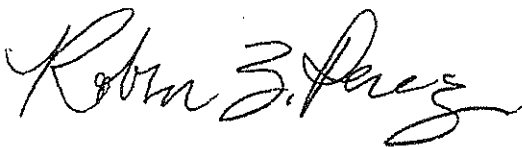
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To:  
Subject:

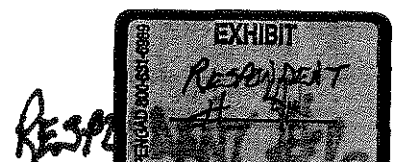
Peterson, Bridget  
Statement

When I heard about the outburst last week, I wasn't surprised. It is unfortunate that this behavior has been ongoing since 2011 if not longer. I happened to be looking at old emails and I found one dated 05/27/2011 – sent by an employee who overheard an outburst from Ms. Mullins. The employee heard everything and sent me an email to "console" me. If a witness took the time to send an email to console, you can imagine that the outburst was loud and unprofessional to the point where this employee felt the need to respond somehow, through an email. The employee indicated that they too had experienced a similar outburst from Ms. Mullins.

Since that time, I have been very careful in how I communicate with Ms. Mullins and I have witnessed her behavior targeting other employees in the office. If there is an issue she dislikes, she tends to express her disapproval in a manner that is unbecoming and often lacking tact. This behavior is unacceptable and management's lack of addressing the issue has allowed Ms. Mullins to continue acting in a manner that fractures teamwork and interferes with productivity. After my encounter with Ms. Mullins, I was hesitant to approach her and soon after, she was promoted – indicating that Management in this office condones such behavior and even rewards with promotion. Many employees have experienced these outbursts with Ms. Mullins, but going to management seems fruitless since Ms. Mullins her Operations Supervisor frequently lunch together. I had read in a recent article, "Employees who get away with angry outbursts damage employee morale". I can attest that this is true in District Office 815.



Robin Z. Perez  
Claims Representative  
DO 815 San Antonio Central  
866-731-4164 X18661  
Save time, go online - [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov)



**Perez, Robin**

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**From:** Perez, Robin  
**Sent:** Friday, May 27, 2011 8:39 AM  
**To:** Rendon, Monica G.  
**Subject:** RE: take it with a grain of salt...

Thanks so much for your email.  
I really don't know what happened and how it spun out of control so quickly.

*Robin F. Perez*

Claims Representative  
DO 815 San Antonio Central  
866-731-4164 X18661  
Save time, go online - [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov)

 Please consider the environment before printing.

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**From:** Rendon, Monica G.  
**Sent:** Friday, May 27, 2011 8:38 AM  
**To:** Perez, Robin  
**Subject:** take it with a grain of salt...

Don't let what happened this morning ruin your day...with Sherrie, I've come to conclude it's never personal. I reminded her of the bi\$%tch fest she and I had the other day and she had forgotten about it. So I told her to take a deep breath and forget about what happened...you should do the same...everything is fine... ☺ TGIF!!

*Monica G. Rendon*

TII Technical Expert  
Social Security Adm.  
San Antonio Central Office  
866-731-4164 ext. 18607  
FAX 210-541-8098  
[monica.g.rendon@ssa.gov](mailto:monica.g.rendon@ssa.gov)

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108  
October 8, 2014

I have worked with Sherie Mullins for ten years now. While she is quite knowledgeable in her job, she is also quite unapproachable. I have seen her on many occasions raise her voice and belittle fellow employees who come to her for assistance. She is sharp-tongued and harsh with her co-workers. First, I do not know what she gains by treating people poorly. Second, I do not understand why management never steps in to put an end to this abusive behavior that Sherie exhibits because everyone in this office has seen it on full display.

There are certain people in the office that seem untouchable – and she is one of them. She can behave in any manner, and employees can lodge complaints, but management protects her and refuses to discipline her. The only people in this office that will not say anything about how Ms. Mullins berates and mistreats co-workers are those that are also in a protected position and a few that are afraid to speak the truth for fear they will be punished in some way for going against a favorite employee.

She frequently is loud and rude when “assisting” co-workers. Her posture is angry and condescending. Many times, I have witnessed her complaining to her friends when certain coworkers come to her for help. Since she is a Technical Expert, it would seem that if she notices someone not performing well, she should be readily available to assist that person in order to help the person fully perform the duties of their job, rather than complain about their ignorance after they come to her for help. Rather, her disparaging comments and hostile attitude prevent people from coming to her for assistance.

I, myself, feel uneasy going to her when I need help with a work issue outside of my area of expertise. I feel like I have to grovel and be complimentary to her before I lead into my question. I worry that if she is having a bad day, I will be chastised or even yelled at by her. While I must say that she has provided me with assistance, and, of late, been more welcoming to me, I still feel trepidation when I approach her because of her derisive manner with so many others. I should not have to cautiously approach her and tip toe – ready to run if she decides she is in a yelling mood. I do not think there is any room in any work place for that type of behavior and it is completely unacceptable that it has gone on unchallenged by management for so long. I think that she is only tolerant of me because of my affiliation with the union.

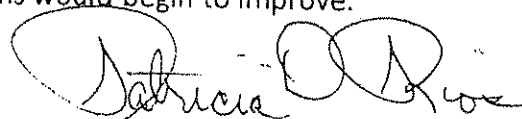
Recently, she went on a “witch hunt” gathering up a posse to go against the union Vice-President and certain other union members in the office. I witnessed her and three other employees “recruiting” certain fellow employees to “go against” the union in a particular office matter. She and her cronies actually walked the office going from desk to desk (of the seemingly “neutral” parties) to convince employees to be on their side of the issue at hand. In essence, she was bullying people to join her side of the issue and, thereby, bullying the s



was opposed to by ostracizing her seeming foes. She and her group of friends have caused much strife in the office that we have yet to recover from to date. Because of her bullying personality, she acts as leader of this "union resistance". She is loud in her disapproval of the union, any union activities, and union members. I have heard her talking to her friends about Bridget Peterson in a very negative way. I have felt compelled to comment to people that we are all U.S. citizens and have the freedom of speech and the right to choose.

This office (DO 815) has a long history of ignoring fraternization between certain management members and their subordinate employees. New employees quickly learn that if they want to have rights and privileges above and beyond the ordinary, they have to join the proper clique and go to lunch with certain supervisors to gain their favor. Sherie is a part of that clique – mostly, she is their leader.

I recently spoke to the District Manager about the bullying by this group. The group needs to be put on notice and reprimanded if their intimidation continues. Also, the management members that are overly friendly with this group should not be allowed to continue their daily lunch outings. Sherie Mullins and her posse have created a hostile environment in this office. If she were moved to another office, perhaps conditions would begin to improve.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patricia D. Rios". The signature is stylized with large, flowing loops.

Patricia D. Rios

T16 Claims Representative

**Peterson, Bridget**

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**From:** Sanpayo, Sandra  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 03, 2014 10:18 AM  
**To:** Peterson, Bridget  
**Subject:** FW: Verbal report regarding incident on 02/04/2014

Hi Bridget,

Here is a copy of the email I sent you back on February 5, 2014, regarding the last incident I experienced with Sherie Mullins on February 4, 2014.

During my tenure with SSA, I have been at the receiving end of Sherie's aggressive outburst several times. I finally reached my limit on February 4, 2014, so much to the point that I discussed the incident with my supervisor for the first time.

I never reported any prior incidents because I take pride in being able to work out any differences I may have with any co-workers in a cordial and productive manner. More specially, by having a one-on-one conversation where each party can share their point of view and openly discuss differences in opinion. I have never felt comfortable doing this with Sherie Mullins, because of her demeanor, I am always apprehensive when I interact or approach her.

I know what a tremendous resource Sherie is for our staff and agency. I really struggled to write both of these emails because I respect her knowledge base and have learned a lot from her and would like to continue to see her as a resource and mentor. However, aggressive behavior and bullying are not acceptable in any work place regardless of who they are.

I am really sadden by the fact that I had to write this note.

*Sandra Sanpayo*  
*T2 Claims Representative*  
*FO 815 San Antonio Central*  
(866)731-4164 Ext. 18609

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**From:** Sanpayo, Sandra  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 05, 2014 3:25 PM  
**To:** Peterson, Bridget  
**Cc:** Sanpayo, Sandra  
**Subject:** Verbal report regarding incident on 02/04/2014

Hi Bridget,

I went ahead and spoke to my supervisor Maria Torres today regarding the incidents that occurred on Tuesday, February 4, 2014, with TE Sherie Mullins.



To recap, I was simply on my way back from the ladies room and happen to walk by Sherie's desk. It was at this point that Sherie stopped me to ask if I had read an email she sent regarding the customer Ramiro Lozano. I explained to her that I had not had an opportunity to read any emails yet as it was my first day back from an extended weekend. This incident happened between 8:30 AM and 9:00 AM.

I described in full detail the unprofessional and aggressive manner and tone in which Sherie Mullins was talking to me in regarding this case.

Furthermore, I also shared my concerns in regard to the intimidating look that Sherie displayed toward me late yesterday afternoon sometime around 3:30 PM and 4:30 PM.

To recap the afternoon incident, I was on my way to the ladies room walking down the pass way right behind Maria Torres's cubical, when Sherie just so happened to pass right in front of me. It was at that point that she stared me down in an intimidating manner. I felt very uncomfortable and uneasy about the whole situation because I know that this type of behavior is not acceptable in any SSA environment. I interpreted the nasty stare down as a means of bullying and intimidation.

In the past, I have experienced other aggressive behavior from this same individual, but failed to make any formal reports to any prior supervisors. Ms. Mullins and I have always been able to iron out any differences amongst ourselves, but now I believe that failing to report prior incidents has been a disservice because the aggressive behavior and outburst have once again taken place.

I have had nothing but respect for Ms. Mullins and I struggled on whether or not to make any report regarding yesterday's incidents.

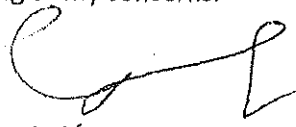
I work really hard to maintain positive working relationships with all of my co-worker's and I strive every day to have a positive impact on those around me. If I thought Ms. Mullins would be open minded to hear me out, I would have preferred to not have to make any formal reports. However, with the intimidating behavior Ms. Mullins displayed yesterday afternoon, I felt it more pertinent to share my concerns with my supervisor Maria Torres. Maria Torres assured me that she would have a discussion with TE Sherie Mullins regarding yesterday's incidents.

I understand that there will always be differences in work ethic and practices in any work environment, but intimidation and aggressive behavior are counterproductive and intolerable in any SSA workplace. Despite personal views and differences each SSA employee must be able to maintain the highest level of professionalism at all times. That applies to both Ms. Mullins and myself.

Per our conversation on Wednesday, February 5, 2014, I took your recommendation and made a verbal report to my supervisor Maria Torres.

I am sending you this email to document this incident.

Thank you for listening to my concerns.

  
Sandra Sainpayo  
T2 Claims Representative  
FO 815 San Antonio Central  
(866)731-4164 Ext. 18609



**From:** Peterson, Bridget  
**Sent:** Friday, September 12, 2014 11:12 AM  
**To:** Mullins, Sherie R.; #DA TX 815 TPF AND ICLAIMS; #DA TX 815 Mgmt  
**Cc:** Perez, Robin; Barnett, Karl  
**Subject:** RE: SHPC Claim Reminders

Why is Ms. Mullins sending this email instead of a member of management? Employees can make suggestions and if management agrees, then they are the ones that should send the email with the instructions. Employees are upset because they feel that Ms. Mullins is being treated as though she is a member of management and they are not happy with receiving instructions from her. I was also told by an employee from the Internet Unit that the instructions are not all correct. Again, she is not a member of management, although they treat her as though she is and she is not even in the Internet Unit. Management needs to follow protocol.

Bridget Peterson  
Vice-President  
AFGE Local 2258

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**From:** Mullins, Sherie R.  
**Sent:** Friday, September 12, 2014 9:28 AM  
**To:** #DA TX 815 TPF AND ICLAIMS  
**Cc:** #DA TX 815 T2 IC  
**Subject:** SHPC Claim Reminders

With new folks doing SHPC this is just a reminder about the claims process – I am including the T2IC unit in case y'all ever back up.

*BEFORE you let the claimant leave – make sure they submitted the claim. You "Query" #18 on the MCS main menu and observe the completed date.*

*DO NOT import the claim unless we are going to need to develop further and retain jurisdiction AND if you are importing it – make sure you receipt the claim in and please code a unit on it.*

*When the OS/MSS folks query the unsigned apps – they will code it according to alpha. If you have not receipted it in- the alpha CR thinks they are waiting for a wet signature.*

*Internet CR's – you might want to review your unsigned cases and make sure they are truly wet signatures. One clue is the DW01 issue "Iclm3p" – if that's not there – then I recommend you query the imnu (#18) to receipt in your claim.*

*\*\*Just this week we have had 3 clmts that I know of come in for status of SHPC claims 2 were not submitted before they left, one submitted but we pulled it in and left the DW01 blank.*

Thanks,

Sherie R. Mullins  
T2 TE/San Antonio (Central) TX 815  
866-731-4164 ext 18629  
[sherie.r.mullins@ssa.gov](mailto:sherie.r.mullins@ssa.gov)



October 6, 2014

Nora E. Hinojosa-Attorney  
Federal Labor Relations Authority  
Dallas Region  
525 S. Griffin St. Ste. 926, LB 107  
Dallas, TX 75202-5093

Case No. DA-CO-14-0439

Dear Ms. Hinojosa,

Sorry for the delay in responding. I was out of the office and just noticed that this was in my mailbox on 10/02/14.

I was warned early on about Sherie and how she tells management everything such as how often you ask questions. That she loses her temper. That she acts as though she's your friend, but will backstab you the first chance she got. That is just to name a few. I like to come to my own conclusions and I don't like listening to gossip.

I will start out by saying that I transferred to this office in July 2011. When I met Sherrie Mullins, instead of saying "nice to meet you", she said "I am anti-union and I am a Republican". My response was "that is your right, to each its own, nice to meet you too".

That is not to say that I was surprised by what she said since she had just met me. But when you represent so many people, you don't react easily to what anyone says. What was odd was that she had just met me. I could not understand why she would make that statement other than to see if she could get a rise out of me.

As to her first allegation, there was no rumor going around. I was aware that she was anti-union when I first started working at this office. Despite that, I was still friendly with her and she responded in kind. Many times, I sent her Supervisor emails complimenting Sherie because she was very knowledgeable and helpful. I knew she liked wooden bracelets and Indian jewelry and several times, when I would find those items, I would buy them for her and place them on her desk along with a note thanking her. Because I had transferred from an area where most of the clientele were poor, there were some things that were new to me and she assisted me. I believe that employees who do a good job deserve to be recognized. Every morning when Sherie saw me, she would say good morning and smile. She would comment on my attire or ask how was my weekend. She always appeared to be happy to see me.

Shortly before the incident in question, I noticed that when I said "good morning" to Sherie, she would mumble "good morning" and would not even look at me. At first, I thought that she was having a bad day. After a few days of the same behavior, I had decided that soon I would talk to her to find out what happened. As I said before, she always appeared to be happy to see me and would get into a discussion with me. I did not have a clue as to what could have happened. On March 28, 2014, I was heading to my desk from the front end interviewing area. It was lunchtime. Employees in this office go to lunch as early as 11:15am. As I am walking down the aisle, I saw Sherie. The only other person that I saw at that time was Jennetta, her friend who sits next to her. I had not planned on speaking to her that day, but it appeared to be the perfect time since most people had left for lunch. I asked her if we could



private. She responded in a raised voice "I do not feel comfortable talking to you in private". I was surprised at the anger in her voice. I told her that I had noticed that she was distant and did not understand why. I asked her what was going on. That's when the accusations started. Her voice had gotten louder to the point that she was yelling and her face was turning red.

She told me that before I started working there, that the employees were like a happy family. That now the employees were lazy because they knew that if Management came after them, I would represent them. She paused for a second and I was able to say that the employees were all adults and how could she hold me responsible for their actions. She said that the office had gone downhill. That because of me, Bertha (the Manager) was a mess and was falling apart. That if she retired, it would be my fault.

Shortly before this incident, I had issues with a Supervisor who was mistreating and abusing employees and I had addressed it. Bertha had spoken to him about it. By this time, I had 11 statements from employees accusing this supervisor of inappropriate behavior and I had gotten the Area Director involved and the Supervisor was on the verge of getting stripped of his supervisory duties (it's possible that they had already taken action, but I am not sure to what point). She accused me of making things up to get him in trouble. How he was such a good man. I was able to say that 11 employees did not think so. She said that she knew him for a long time and she did not believe anything anyone had to say about him. In her statement, towards the end when she stated that I ruined a career, I guess she is referring to this supervisor who was demoted and transferred to another office.

An employee came over to Sherie's desk to ask her a question. Sherie calmed down long enough to answer her question. Where that employee sat was not visible from Sherie's desk. I truly believe that the employee was trying to diffuse the situation because the question she asked was very general and I knew that she knew the answer. It did not work. As soon as the employee started walking away, Sherie continued.

Sherie's supervisor (Maria Torres) who happened to be my supervisor was coming towards us. Sherie's back was to her, but I was facing that direction so I saw her coming. I thought she was coming to tell Sherie to calm down or to go into one of the offices, but instead, she asked her a question and started to walk away. She had not taken more than a few steps before Sherie started off where she left. By now, she is screaming. She was enraged. I tried talking to her like I do with an irate claimant by keeping my voice low. That causes them to stop yelling because otherwise, they can't hear me. It did not work with Sherie. It actually seemed to make her angrier.

She accused me of advising an employee to call the police to report another employee.

Her statement is completely inaccurate. We did not discuss anything at length because she was yelling and it was hard to get a sentence in edgewise. I never said anything about the decline in the office. I did not blame Bertha Cruz for anything. I never mentioned Karl Barnett's name. A lot of people know that I have his cell phone number just like I have the cell number of Bertha Cruz and several other members of management. I never boast. Anyone who knows me will tell you that. I have talked about being successful in Arbitration, but it was when I was accused of going after Management when they have not done anything wrong. It was to point out that an Arbitrator is a third party who is neutral, and if management had done nothing wrong, then why did the Arbitrator rule in our favor.

I have met with management and resolved issues informally, yet I never boasted about it. That is why the employees do not know what I have accomplished because I keep things to myself.

As to having her cornered, I had moved from the aisle because the employee that sits next to her kept standing up to go to the printer and I was in the way. I never had her cornered. If I had, her best friend who sat next to her would have gotten a security guard or a member of management. She never told me to leave. I walked away when she yelled that I was delusional. I realized that I was not going to be able to calm her down. She was still yelling when I walked away.

When I read her statement, it blew me away. Her accusation of me trying to make an example out of her makes no sense. That I was soliciting statements is an outright lie. Employees who found out about what had happened, came to me and told me that the same thing had happened to them. I asked them if they would submit a statement. I did not go around the office asking for statements. Although, more than the three employees who submitted the statements told me that they have been victims of her verbal abuse and humiliation, they did not want to report it to Management because they feared further abuse from Ms. Mullins and some said that they felt that if they reported her, that she would not provide assistance in processing claims when they had questions.

As to her friendship with management, that is true. Maria Torres and she are very good friends. They go to lunch together frequently. The problem with this office is that there are a lot of cliques. All offices have cliques, but not to this degree. What makes it worse is that Ms. Torres is part of one of the cliques. Just like the supervisor who was demoted was part of a clique. That creates a lot of problems. Management, as a whole likes Sherie because she volunteers to do anything they want done. They don't want to upset her because she may stop assisting them as much as she does now.

I did not go around soliciting statements from anyone. An employee who had heard what had happened told me not to feel bad. That Sherie has humiliated and yelled at many employees. That it had been happening for years. That she has done the same to him more than a dozen times and he had witnessed it happening to other employees many times. Two other employees came forward and gave me their statements after I confirmed with them that they had also been humiliated and/or verbally abused.

The incident that she is referring to was regarding an email that she sent. I had not even read the email. Employees started coming to my desk complaining about the email. They asked questions like "since when is it O.K. for employees to send these types of emails" and "why do they let her get away with everything", "why do they treat her like if she's a member of management", "I thought we had to go through our supervisor with any suggestions and they would send out the email"? By then, I decided to send Management and the employees an email. I wanted the employees to know that I was addressing their complaints.

I am sending a copy of her email. She comes across as though she is giving orders by capitalizing the letters of the first couple of words. I am also sending a copy of my email.

When I read her statement, it made me wonder how long did it take for her to be able to fill a full page with tiny letters full of lies. Anyone who knows me will read that statement and know that the allegations are not true. For over 31 years, I have been passionate about helping people. I really liked Sherie. I still don't know what caused her outburst and our subsequent falling out. I know that she was very upset about what happened to the supervisor who was demoted, but he did that to himself through his actions. All the Union has is a National Agreement and our job is to make sure Management does not violate it.

Ms. Mullins states I violate her rights to representation. In what way, may I ask? At no time has she ever requested Union representation on any issue. Such representation would not be denied her if she

4

were ever to request it. I have no knowledge of any adverse or other negative action taken against her by management for which she might need representation. If I felt I could not, in good faith represent her, we have many other representatives in our local who could represent her impartially.

I have never ostracized her, either verbally or in writing, in any forum, public or private. The Union has filed a grievance (still pending) against SSA concerning Ms. Mullins berating and bullying her coworkers on numerous occasions over a period of many years without repercussions from Management and even with their apparent condoning of same.

As relief for the grievance, we have requested Ms. Mullins be placed in an environment where she does not have the opportunity to berate or bully her coworker. We also requested disciplinary action be taken against **Management Officials** who, thus far, have refused to rein in her inappropriate behavior. They are permitting the hostile environment she has created to continue. It is their responsibility to create a safe and non-threatening environment for all employees. We did not request any adverse action be taken against Ms. Mullins in the body of the grievance, only that her inappropriate behavior not be condoned and action taken to end it. If Management were to take an adverse action against her, she would be entitled to Union Representation and we would not refuse to represent her. It is our responsibility as Union Representatives to ensure employees we represent do not have to put up with bullying from anyone, whether it be a member of Management, a member of the general public or a coworkers.

On March 28, 2014, the day that the incident occurred, I approached Mrs. Cruz and informed her of what had happened. On April 3, 2014, I submitted the statements that were given to me by three employees who had heard about what had happened.

Several days after, my Manager, Bertha Cruz and I spoke about the incident. Mrs. Cruz informed me that although I had submitted three statements from employees concerning her bullying, nine employees had submitted statements in favor of Ms. Mullins. That contradicts Ms. Mullins' allegation on her ULP statement that coworkers tried to listen and could not hear us, which leads me to question how the information for the statements were obtained.

Mrs. Cruz disclosed the content of one of the statements indicating that the employee was concerned about Ms. Mullins safety because I had her cornered in her cubicle. I asked for copies of the statements and Mrs. Cruz stated that because they were not taking action against me, that she did not feel it was necessary for her to give them to me.

I then asked Mrs. Cruz, if that had truly happened, why didn't the employee alert Management or a Security Guard? Mrs. Cruz acknowledged that it did not make sense. Furthermore, Mrs. Cruz indicated that when she spoke to the Supervisor, Ms. Torres, she stated that when she approached Ms. Mullins workstation during my alleged predatory advancement, what she witnessed was myself and Ms. Mullins having a normal conversation.

Respectfully,

Bridget Peterson  
Vice President  
AFGE Loca1 2258

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
BEFORE THE FEDERAL LABOR RELATIONS AUTHORITY  
DALLAS REGION**

**CASE NAME:** American Federation of Government Employees, Local 2258

**CASE NUMBER:** DA-CO-14-0439

**AFFIDAVIT**

1 I, Bridget Peterson, make the following voluntary statement in cooperation with an official  
2 investigation being conducted pursuant to the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations  
3 Statute. I have been assured by an Agent of the Federal Labor Relations Authority that this  
4 statement will be considered confidential by the United States Government and will not be  
5 disclosed as long as the case remains open, unless I testify at a formal hearing and it then  
6 becomes necessary to produce the statement at the hearing. Upon the closing of the case, the  
7 statement may be subject to disclosure in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, as  
8 amended.

9 Home Address: 159 Whitetail Drive, Spring Branch, Texas, 78070

10 E-mail Address: b.newyorkrican@gmail.com; bridget.peterson@ssa.gov

11 Work Telephone Number: 210-340-3190

12 Cell Phone Number: 210-287-5831

13 Work Position: Claims Representative

14 Years worked with Employer: 32 years

15 I am currently a member of AFGE Local 2258. I hold the position of Vice President. I have been  
16 a member of AFGE for approximately 31 years.

17 I began working in this particular San Antonio SSA office in July 2011. When I was introduced  
18 to Sherie Mullins, another employee who is not a member of management, introduced me to her.  
19 When I met Sherie, she introduced herself by saying "I am anti-union, and I am Republican." I  
20 told her that was her right, and that everyone was entitled to their own opinion.

21 Sherie is a Technical Expert (TE). The previous office I was working in dealt with lower-income  
22 clientele. This office primarily deals with higher-income people, so issues I had not previously  
23 encountered were coming up. I would seek out Sherie for assistance in her capacity as a TE, and

BP INITIALS



1 she was always helpful. People often wondered why I was friendly with her because she was  
2 anti-union, but I respected her. I used to give her kudos, and go out of my way to have her  
3 recognized for always being helpful. I also would bring her little things I knew she liked, such as  
4 Indian jewelry or wooden bracelets, and I would put them on her desk with a thank-you note. We  
5 were friendly until about the week before March 28, 2014. During that week, I noticed that she  
6 would not look at me, and that she had grown distant.

7 On March 28, 2014, I approached Sherie and asked if we could speak in private. I was walking  
8 from the front-end interviewing and to the back, toward my desk. I happened to pass by Sherie  
9 and asked her if I could speak to her privately. I wanted to speak to her privately because I did  
10 not want what we were talking about to be overheard. She told me that she did not feel  
11 comfortable talking to me in private, and appeared angry. I told her that I was sensing distance,  
12 and that I wanted to know what was happening. She began yelling and told me that the office  
13 was going downhill, that they used to be a family, that employees were lazier, and that  
14 employees could get away with anything because they knew I would represent them against  
15 management.

16 Prior to this conversation with Sherie, there was a supervisor, Alfonso, who had recently become  
17 a supervisor. Shortly after he became a supervisor, I began receiving employee complaints about  
18 his abusive behavior. One day, an email went out from Alfonso and I strongly disagreed with the  
19 way he worded it. I resolved this informally. This behavior continued, and I ultimately went to  
20 the manager and then to the Area Director, Karl Barnett. I chose to resolve these issues  
21 informally rather than file a grievance. Around the time of the March 28, 2014 conversation with  
22 Sherie, Alfonso was being stripped of his supervisory duties. Sherie must have found out about  
23 my efforts with this, because she brought up that she could not believe how I was treating  
24 Alfonso. I told her that I had eleven statements from employees who were unhappy with his  
25 actions as a supervisor, and that's when she began screaming. She was obviously upset, and I  
26 tried to keep my voice very low, but that did not work.

27 One employee, Maricruz, <sup>approached BP</sup> ~~tried to approach~~ Sherie's desk during the conversation. I believe that  
28 it was during the beginning of the conversation. I knew that Maricruz did not really have this  
29 question, because it was very general. It was obvious she was trying to diffuse the situation.

BP INITIALS

1 After Sherie answered the question for Maricruz, she then picked up where she left off—yelling  
2 and screaming. Her face was bright red. Maria Torres, our supervisor, started approaching us. I  
3 thought she was going to tell us to take the conversation elsewhere, but she came and asked  
4 Sherie a work-related question. Sherie answered it. There was no way that the supervisor could  
5 ~~not~~ <sup>not BP</sup> have overheard the conversation. As she walked away, Sherie started yelling again, even  
6 angrier. It seemed as if anyone asked her a question she became angrier than before.

7 After I told her I had 11 statements, Sherie told me I was delusional. I decided to walk away.  
8 When I got to my desk, I sent her an email. I have provided a copy of this email.

9 During our discussion, Sherie accused me of having an employee call the police on another  
10 employee several days prior to this incident. I sent her the email to address this accusation  
11 because I felt like I could not speak during this conversation, because she was yelling the entire  
12 time. I never had an employee call the police on another employee, but that employee did call the  
13 police. ~~One~~ <sup>That - BP</sup> employee, who was new, told me that he had been assaulted by another employee,  
14 and he wanted to know if, as a Federal employee, he could call the local police on the matter. I  
15 told him that just because he was a Federal employee did not mean that he was not a citizen, and  
16 that he had the right to call the police. He did call the police, because he wanted a police report  
17 as a record of the incident.

18 Because management has failed to discipline Sherie for losing her temper at other employees, the  
19 Union filed a grievance. This was filed by my husband Steve, who is the President of the Local.  
20 He did not date it, but it was postmarked for May 16, 2014. It was over management's failure to  
21 control the verbal outbursts of Sherie Mullins, because she had been berating her coworkers for  
22 at least 13 years. This was based on a statement submitted to me by an employee. As relief, we  
23 asked for Bertha Cruz to be suspended for 7 days and for Sherie to be reassigned to not have  
24 personal contact with her coworkers. While this did not make it in the grievance, Steve asked in  
25 his written presentation for a verbal personal apology to me from Sherie.

<sup>at another office</sup>  
26 We have another TE<sup>^</sup> who cannot be around other employees because of her allergies. She works  
27 from a private room and responds to other employees' questions via instant messages. She has an  
28 outbox on her door in case they need her to review something. She can do her job as a TE  
29 without being around other people. Because this TE can conduct her job in this manner, we

BP

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1 requested that Sherie be moved into a similar situation. We did not ask, nor was it our intent, that  
2 she be demoted, fired, or suspended. We only wanted her behavior to stop. Because we have an  
3 employee who is able to perform her job without contact with employees, we thought that in the  
4 interest of preventing further outbursts, this proposal would be reasonable.

5 Some years ago, perhaps in the 90s, I was working in another office and I asked management to  
6 ~~take action against~~ <sup>talk to</sup> another employee who was telling me that he sympathized with postal  
7 workers who were going on shooting rampages at post offices. I took my concerns over this to  
8 management, including everything he said to me, and urged corrective action. I requested  
9 counseling for this employee, or some kind of warning that disciplinary action would be taken

10 against him. I wanted management to follow contract protocol. I was afraid for my own safety and my co-work-  
11 because of this employee. Management spoke to the employee, but I do not believe that <sup>ke</sup>  
12 disciplinary action was taken against him for this incident. I let the matter drop after that.  
13 *Steve the local President may have filed a grievance, we are not sure, BP*

14 The grievance against Bertha for failing to discipline Sherie was denied. We did not appeal that  
15 decision yet. I sent an email to the Area Director about his decision, but we have not pursued the  
16 appeal yet. I told the Area Director that ~~we were~~ <sup>I was</sup> disappointed, but also pointed out that his  
17 decision had no substance to it. In previous decisions, he had always rationalized them well. I  
18 told Bertha that she needed to read all of the statements I had submitted against Sherie. She told  
19 me that nine people had submitted statements in support of Sherie, and that she did not believe  
20 any of the statements ~~against~~ <sup>in favor of</sup> Sherie. Sherie had been allowed to see the statements that were  
21 presented on my behalf, but the Union was not allowed to see the statements presented on her  
22 behalf. When I found out about this ULP, I asked for the statements. Bertha provided me a copy.  
23 There were seven, not nine, statements.

24 The ULP charge states that I approached her because I had heard a rumor that she was anti-  
25 union. That is not true because I knew that she was the day I met her. She also says that  
26 employees who were 3-4 feet away from the desk could not hear our discussion. However,  
27 Maricruz says in her statement that she approached the cubicle because she sensed something  
28 was going on. Because of the way the office is set up, there is no way for her to be able to tell  
29 what was going on, particularly if we were talking in low voices. Roger Urrabazo said that he  
witnessed the discussion, but I noticed that day that he was not there. I would have remembered

*BP*

INITIALS

1 if he was there. Neither of these people liked me from the time I started at this office, and neither  
2 of them knew me. *I was told by an employee that the prior Manager*  
*spoke negatively about me before I reported to the office and that*  
*may be the reason why. BP*  
3 The statement from Lilly Calderon cannot be true. She sits approximately <sup>25 ft</sup> 30 feet away from  
4 Sherie. She states that she heard one statement, but if the ULP is correct that Sherie never raised  
5 her voice, then someone is lying. Maria Torres states that she observed me near Sherie's desk,  
6 and that the conversation started near Jennetta's desk, which also could not be true. She mentions  
7 Roger's statement as well, but I know that he was not there, and she stated that Jennetta  
8 perceived my actions as aggressive. This statement leads you to believe that she witnessed the  
9 entire incident. She could not have observed this incident, because of the way her cubicle is  
10 positioned. I would have seen her. The only time I saw her is when she came over to ask the  
11 question. Then she said that Roger told her I was getting closer and closer. Either Roger told her,  
12 or she saw me. It would not have been possible for her to see us, *unless she was standing*  
*outside of her cubicle in which case I would have seen her. BP*  
13 Sherie also stated in the charge that I went around the office soliciting statements against her, but  
14 that never happened either. Other employees approached me about the incident, and I asked them  
15 if they wanted to submit a statement. To say that I started intimidating and harassing her by  
16 holding meetings with 3-4 other employees in full view of her, this is not true. These employees  
17 wanted to come forward with me and discuss problems they had had with her.  
18 I am shocked by the allegations in the charge. I take my representational duties very seriously,  
19 and this hurts me personally.

I have read, and have had an opportunity to correct, this affidavit consisting of 4 pages, including the signature page, and affirm that the facts asserted are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Bridget Peterson

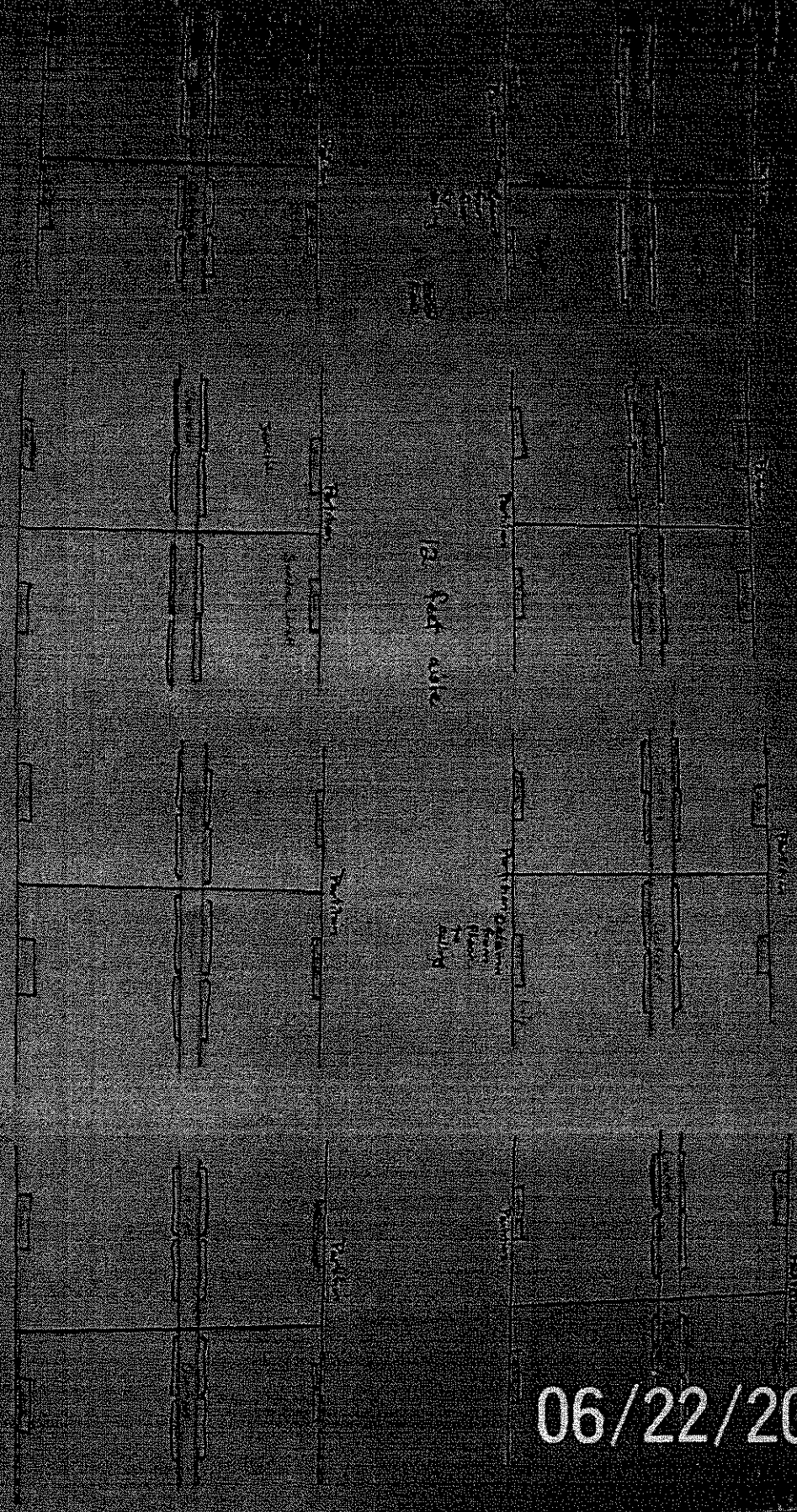
Affiant's Signature

12/04/14

Date

B.P. INITIALS

06/22/201



From South to North is 10 feet  
From West to East is 10 feet

Drawing is for the building structure

EXHIBIT  
RESPONDENTS  
# 1A

ENGAD 800-831-838